

M.Phil. in African Studies

Eligibility for the course

Applications are welcome from British, EU and overseas graduate students. Minimum qualifications are: a good 2.1 Class Honours degree and a good command of English. The Centre, however, regards an Upper 2.1 or First (or equivalent) as essential for the MPhil in African Studies. An Upper 2.1 is equivalent to 67% or above in the final year of undergraduate study. All candidates for admission to the course are expected to be of PhD potential. It is not possible to lay down fixed standards for overseas applicants (although the notes below offer some rough guidelines) but candidates will normally be expected to have degree results in at least the top quarter of their graduating cohort at their previous university. It should be emphasized, though, that the Cambridge entry system is a flexible one. The Centre does not follow mechanical rules in judging applicants; instead it considers for each individual applicant, the level of the academic achievement, the research proposal, academic references and personal writing samples to look for evidence of ability to carry out and present a research project of a high standard. The following are some rough, 'rule-of-thumb' standards, formulated over the years:

- US and Canadian students are required to submit an up-to-date transcript of their course marks and normally expected to have a cumulative GPA of 3.7 or better.
- German students should have their Grundstudium completed (with a 1.5 mark or better in the relevant subjects) as a minimum requirement, but the course is better suited to those who have finished their entire Hochschulstudium.
- The equivalent requirement from Holland is a doctoraal and from Belgium a licencie(a)t (both with distinction).
- Italian students will be expected to have the laurea (cum laude grade) and Spanish students the licenciatura.
- French students may apply after having received their maitrise, or after passing the DEA
- Israeli students are expected to have a BA with a grade of 90% or higher, and preferably an MA degree.
- Candidates from Commonwealth (or former Commonwealth) countries which follow the British system should have achieved at least a good 2:1 or equivalent.
- Candidates from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and most countries of South Asia should have a first-class masters degree from a good university.
- Candidates from China should have a first degree with a grade of at least 85% from a recognized and competitive university.

It is hoped that for candidates from other countries the foregoing examples provide sufficient guidance for establishing equivalent degree and grade requirements.

Additional Entry Requirements - for those applicants whose native language is not English

Applicants who are not native speakers in English must have a fluent command of the English language. Normally, all applicants must prove that they have passed one of the required language proficiency examinations. Foreign applicants who believe that this requirement should be waived for them, because they already read, write and speak English at a near native level, should make this case in their application or at the time they receive their conditional offer.

The Board of Graduate Studies prefers the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Test available through the British Council. This is a single battery of tests. In the ELTS (English Language Testing Service) or IELTS (International English Language Testing System) examinations the minimum requirement is an overall band score of 7.0 with no individual element of the test scoring below 6.5.

TOEFL tests should only be undertaken if IELTS tests are not available. The minimum overall score normally required from those who are tested by the American TOEFL system is 600, plus a satisfactory result in the TOEFL Test of Written English (for further details see the Graduate Studies Prospectus). The Princeton TOEFL test must be taken with the Test of Written English at the same time. If you took a language test several years ago and have not been working or studying in English since you may be asked to provide more recent test results. The Board of Graduate Studies is advised that scores on English Language Tests are a reliable indicator of proficiency for about 2 years.

In cases of doubt, a telephone interview may be required between the prospective supervisor and the applicant.